



Quinnipiac Valley Audubon Society

Riverbound Farm Sanctuary

FEB 03 2010

A Chapter of The National Audubon Society Serving
Cheshire, Hamden, Meriden, Northford, North Branford, North Haven and Wallingford

January 30, 2010

Paul E. Stacey
Department of Environmental Protection
Bureau of Water Protection & Land Reuse
Planning & Standards Division
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

Dear Mr. Stacey:

I am writing on behalf of the Quinnipiac Valley Audubon Society, the local chapter of the National Audubon Society, a conservation organization that serves Meriden, Wallingford, Cheshire, Hamden, North Haven, North Branford and Northford, Connecticut with approximately 500 members. Quinnipiac Valley Audubon Society (QVAS) devotes its efforts to promote public interest in the conservation of birds, wildlife, their habitats and other natural resources. We help people increase their understanding of the interrelationships that abound in the natural world expanding their awareness and enhancing their appreciation.

Quinnipiac Valley Audubon Society owns and manages a sanctuary, Riverbound Farm on the Quinnipiac, located at 1881 Cheshire Street, Cheshire, Connecticut. The sanctuary includes a house in development as a nature museum/center and has 23.4 acres of diverse habitat preserved permanently as open space; (1,710 feet of its western boundary is the Quinnipiac River). Therefore, it is of the greatest interest and importance to me that the Quinnipiac River be preserved and protected now and into the future.

A large section of the trail at Riverbound Farm is located along the Quinnipiac River and we have observed on several occasions Spotted Sandpipers and Great-blue Herons as they probe for invertebrates on exposed river banks, Kingfishers nesting and catching fish in the river, Mallard and Wood ducks swimming as well as Otters. Wild turkey, deer, fox, chipmunks and a variety of birds make their homes in the forested areas along the river. It is a corridor for migrating birds.

On October 11, 2009 some member of QVAS participated in a birding event known as the "Big Sit" and staked out our 17 foot circle at Hanover Pond near Red Bridge. One event witnessed was a Bald Eagle catching a fish and then landing on a fallen tree in the water and watching the eagle as it ate its dinner. A second eagle watched hoping for an opportunity to eat as well. On other occasions we have observed three eagles along the Quinnipiac River and Hanover Pond and the eagles have

been recorded for the National Audubon Society's yearly Christmas Bird Count (CBC) beginning in 1996 and on seven subsequent occasions at this location during QVAS's annual participation in this event. The CBC count dates can be any one 24 hour period from December 14 through January 5. QVAS has been a participant in this event for 38 years.

Thanks to all the hard work, dedication and diligence of the Quinnipiac River Watershed Association eagles and osprey have become a common sight. This organization's efforts over the past 25-years have strived and have succeeded to improve the quality of the water in the Quinnipiac River and that labour must not be in vain.

The Department of Environmental Protection draft regulations are good and it is the first scientific attempt to regulate stream flow in more than 40 years, but they are not perfect. The DEP has proposed four classifications for rivers. My greatest concern is that **"Class 4" must be eliminated because it would offer no minimum protection to certain "unredeemable" rivers** and the Quinnipiac and its tributaries are *at risk* of this classification. It **must not be allowed** to happen.

There is enough yearly rain fall in Connecticut to provide for all users to share and should be managed wisely and efficiently. Aquifers are closely connected to rivers and the DEP must also regulate groundwater as well as surface water to prevent our rivers being sucked dry.

Clearly, a better way to manage and preserve our water in Connecticut must be a part of our economic and conservation plans as we strive to improve our state, and its communities, in this century. Good management can provide water for all.

In conclusion after abolishing the **"Class 4"** category, the stream flow regulations must go forward to ensure that strong, effective and balanced regulations are completed and then implemented. It is critically important to our state and to the quality of life of its citizens therein.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Loretta Victor", with a horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Loretta Victor

President

Quinnipiac Valley Audubon Society

Meriden CT 06450

[illegible]